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SUBJECT: GOI Leaders' Statements on Pakistan and Terrorism, December 21-23

¶1. (SBU) Mission reports below statements made by the Indian Foreign Minister, the Indian Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and President of the ruling United Progressive Alliance government over the last three days on Pakistan and terrorism. Despite the often heated headlines in both India and Pakistan relating to these statements, we note that the remarks are quite restrained and measured, given the immense public pressure on these Indian leaders to produce results. We do not see anything in these remarks that suggests inflammatory warmongering rhetoric.

Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee

¶2. (U) On December 22, Mukherjee addressed 122 Indian chiefs of mission in Delhi at a meeting that had been scheduled before the Mumbai attacks. The meeting had previously been planned for August 22 but was cancelled because of a Nuclear Supplier Group meeting on August 24 which was to consider a waiver for the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. In his speech to the Indian diplomats, Mukherjee covered the entire spectrum of Indian foreign affairs engagement - its context, achievements and challenges.

¶3. (U) In speaking about foreign relations with neighbors and the Mumbai attacks, Mukherjee said: "In our neighborhood we have continued with our efforts to deepen engagement, either bilaterally or multilaterally and even by assuming a built-in asymmetry in responsibilities. An objective assessment shows that this policy has yielded results except with Pakistan. The recent terrorist attack on Mumbai was unprecedented both in terms of its scale and audacity. This and the series terrorist incidents preceding it including the attack on our embassy in Kabul, where we lost our colleagues indicate that terrorism emanating out of Pakistan is acquiring an increasingly dangerous dimension and continues to threaten peace and stability in this region and beyond."

¶4. (U) In his 2032 word speech, Mukherjee devoted the following 280 words to Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai attacks:

-- "We have so far worked at several levels. At the international level we have sought the support of the international community to put pressure on Pakistan to deal effectively with the terrorism. We

have highlighted that the infrastructure of terrorism in Pakistan has to be dismantled permanently. We are not saying this just because we are affected but because we believe that it will be good for the entire world and also for Pakistani people and society. This terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan is the greatest terrorist danger to peace and security of the entire civilized world. There has been some effort s far by the international community but this is not enough. Much more needs to be done and the actions should be pursued to their logical conclusion. We need effective steps not only to bring those responsible for the Mumbai attacks to justice, but also to ensure that such acts of terrorism do not recur."

-- "Unfortunately Pakistan's response so far has demonstrated their earlier tendency to resort to a policy of denial and to seek to deflect and shift the blame and responsibility. We expect civilian Government of Pakistan to take effective steps to deal with elements within Pakistan who still continue the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. We have so far acted with utmost restraint and are hopeful that international community will use its influence to urge Pakistani Government to take effective action. While we continue to persuade the international community and Pakistan we are also clear that ultimately it is we who have to deal with this problem. We will take all measures necessary as we deem fit to deal with the situation."

¶5. (U) On December 23, Pranab Mukherjee responded to reporters' question outside parliament. The Times of India appears to have the most complete verbatim account of what he said: "My request to our friends in Pakistan would be (that) they should address the issue. The issue is not creating war hysteria or raising accusing fingers

NEW DELHI 00003236 002 OF 003

at others," External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters outside Parliament. "There has been a sinister, heinous terrorist attack on Mumbai from the elements in Pakistan. India has requested Pakistan to take action against the perpetrators of those attacks. We request Pakistan to act on our request," he said.

UPA President Sonia Gandhi

¶6. (U) The text of Sonia Gandhi's remarks on December 21 while campaigning at Raubirsinghpura in Jammu is not available. The following are excerpts from the media reporting on the speech:

-- The Hindu: Addressing an election rally here, just a few km from the International Border with Pakistan, Ms. Gandhi said it had been India's endeavor to have good relations with neighbors. "But our aspirations were not respected and our desire for having peace should not be treated as our weakness." She asked Islamabad to come (down) heavily on those who had been attacking India. "If that does not happen, we have the capability to give a befitting reply," she said amid a thunderous response from the gathering. (Note: The balance of the Hindu article reports on Gandhi's comments highlighting the efforts of the United Progressive Alliance government's efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, listing its achievements and attacking the opposition National Democratic Alliance government for its non-performance when it was in power.)

-- Indian Express: Sonia Gandhi stressed that India is competent to give a befitting reply to those who are continuously encouraging terrorism in their soil. Sonia said India's desire for peace should not be taken as a sign of weakness. "We have always tried to maintain brotherly relationships with our neighboring countries. The sad part is that our emotions have never been respected. I want to make one thing very clear that our wish on having peace and harmony should not be misunderstood as our weakness. People who are continuously encouraging terrorism from their soil, we want to tell them that we are competent of giving a befitting reply to them," she said."

-- Asian News International (wire service): Sonia said India's desire for peace should not be taken as a sign of weakness. "We have always tried to maintain brotherly relationship with our neighboring countries. The sad part is that our emotions have never been

respected. I want to make one thing very clear that our wish or having peace and harmony should not be misunderstood as our weakness. People who are continuously encouraging terrorism from their soil, we want to tell them that we are competent of giving a befitting reply to them," she said. (Note: The balance of the ANI story reports on Gandhi congratulating the people of Jammu and Kashmir for participating in large numbers in the ongoing assembly elections.)

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

¶ 17. (U) The Prime Minister addressed the Indian chiefs of mission on December 23. The full text of his remarks is not available, but the Prime Minister's Office released a press statement which includes the following excerpt on terrorism: "Prime Minister referred to the international security environment, and said that threats such as terrorism and piracy required a well thought out strategy. India sought peace and stability in its neighborhood. The situation was however worrisome. Non-state actors were practicing terrorism aided and abetted by state establishments. The Mumbai terrorist attacks were an attack on India's ambitions to emerge as an economic power. India would not accept a situation where terrorism is used as an instrument to cripple India's economy or the values it stands for."

¶ 18. (U) Emerging from parliament on December 23, the Prime Minister
NEW DELHI 00003236 003 OF 003

made comments on Pakistan, in response to reporters' questions. The most complete verbatim account of what he said appears to be in the Indian Express which reported: Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said: "What we want from Pakistan is to dismantle the terror machine. That is the one demand. This is in the interest of the people of India and Pakistan. The terror machine should be dismantled without any further loss. The issue is not war. The issue is terror and territory in Pakistan being used to promote, aid and abet terror here. I think that is the issue. Nobody wants war."

The following is additional media reporting on the Prime Minister's remarks outside parliament on December 23:

-- Times of India: 'India to Pak: Don't create war hysteria': Later talking to reporters outside parliament, Singh said India does not want war with Pakistan but would like Islamabad to dismantle the "terror machine" existing on its soil and the international community to use its "power" to persuade Islamabad to do so. "The issue is not war. The issue is terror and territory in Pakistan being used to provoke, to aid and abet terrorism. I think that is the issue, the issue is not war. Nobody wants war," he said when asked to speak on the present standoff with Pakistan in the wake of Mumbai terror attacks.

-- The Hindu 'Nobody wants war: Manmohan': Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday reiterated that India wanted Pakistan to dismantle the terror infrastructure and urged the international community to persuade Pakistan to put an end to terror. "Nobody wants war," Dr. Singh said when asked by reporters outside Parliament House if war hysteria was being created on both sides. "The issue is not war, but terrorism being aided and abetted by Pakistan. We want Pakistan to make objective efforts to dismantle the terror infrastructure," he said.

-- AP: 'No one wants war': India's prime minister sought to lower tensions with neighboring Pakistan on Tuesday in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, saying 'nobody wants war.' 'The issue is not war, nobody wants war,' Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told reporters. 'The issue is terror and territory in Pakistan being used to promote and abet terrorism,' he said.

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